

Project Proposal
Adding CSU Data to the
ASSIST Major Preparation Explorer
August 17, 2004

Purpose of the Project:

The purpose of this project is to modify the current ASSIST Major Preparation Explorer to include information about California State University campuses and explore linkages with CSUMentor. The ASSIST Major Preparation Explorer is a web-based system for students and counselors to explore which colleges, universities, majors and courses are available to students interested in attaining a University baccalaureate degree and it is fully integrated with the extensive course articulation data available in ASSIST. This feature is currently accessible through the public ASSIST web site at www.assist.org.

Background:

In 2003 the University of California contracted with ASSIST to design, develop, implement, and operate the ASSIST Major Preparation Explorer web site in order to provide greater service to current and potential UC-bound transfer students. Utilizing the extensive ASSIST database of course and major articulation, the focus for this new site was to provide students with new ways to explore available university baccalaureate degrees and how California Community Colleges can be used most effectively in preparing for transfer. The first phase of the ASSIST Major Prep Explorer was activated in October 2003 and the final phase with complete functionality for all UC campus information was activated in March 2004.

The 2003 proposal for this project was approved by the ASSIST Board and the site was intentionally designed to provide a general purpose website, based on existing articulation data in ASSIST, that could eventually be easily expanded to include California State University information. In order to be more useful to greater numbers of California students and counselors the Major Prep Explorer needs to be expanded to include information about California State University campuses where the a majority of California community college students ultimately transfer. Expansion of the ASSIST Major Prep Explorer to include CSU data is an activity in the current 2004-2006 ASSIST Strategic Plan that the ASSIST Board hopes will be achieved.

The ASSIST Major Prep Explorer allows students to choose among several paths that provide information to help them make informed decisions about their educational plans. One path focuses on choosing a major and the courses required to prepare for that major. Other paths focus on the college or university the student will attend. All paths ultimately lead students to understand the community college coursework they must take in order to prepare for their university work in a specific major.

The Articulation System Stimulating Interinstitutional Student Transfer (ASSIST) is California's official repository for course articulation information. All California public

universities maintain their most current official articulation agreements established with California community colleges. ASSIST also includes other important articulation information including lists of courses transferable for general credit to UC and CSU, and those courses which meet the statewide common General Education programs, CSU GE/Breadth and IGETC.

CSU Mentor is the primary web site for students to learn more about CSU campuses and to apply for freshman or transfer admission. The CSUMentor web site currently uses IGETC and CSU GE-Breadth data from ASSIST to support the “Transfer Planner.” Many features in CSUMentor are also available in the CaliforniaColleges.edu web site that serves all segments of California higher education.

Customer/Project Needs to be Addressed:

While the CSUMentor web site provides a broad range of functionality for student seeking transfer and applying to CSU campuses, it does not provide students with any college-to-university course articulation information and the current “matching assistant” feature only provides basic information for students seeking to learn more about various majors across CSU campuses. In addition, the CSU admissions application provides information about CSU majors based on the national HEGIS coding system and that makes it difficult for students to identify the actual majors they are interested in pursuing. The ASSIST Major Prep Explorer provides enhanced ways for students to explore major in various fields of interest and identify the actual major they should seek at specific university campuses. The CSU Chancellor’s Office would like to expand the ASSIST Major Prep Explorer to include information on all CSU campus baccalaureate majors in order to extend the functionality found in CSUMentor. They would also like to establish more direct linkages between the ASSIST and CSUMentor web sites so that students on either system can more easily access information from the other.

The ASSIST Major Prep Explorer has been well received and well used. It is being more closely integrated with the primary ASSIST web site to make it easier for students to explore majors and articulation. Since a majority of the students who transfer from community colleges to four-year universities ultimately end up at a CSU campus, the Major Prep Explorer would benefit a significantly larger group of students who use ASSIST as it is expanded to include CSU information as well as UC.

Although ASSIST has always provided course articulation information, until the Major Prep Explorer was developed, students were not able to easily link to articulation from information which describes majors at universities and vice versa. The ASSIST Major Prep Explorer provides students, advisors, outreach representatives and others with a broader look at the importance of selecting a major, an overview of what majors are available, information on what majors at other campuses are related to a field of study and how community college coursework can prepare students for transferring into the major of their choice.

Proposed Work:

This proposal calls for the ASSIST Major Prep Explorer software and database to be modified and expanded to include information about majors at California State University campuses and to include linkages from ASSIST to CSUMentor. This proposal also calls for further analysis to recommend how CSUMentor might be expanded to include linkages directly into the ASSIST Major Prep Explorer to better facilitate student use of both systems. All of the work will be conducted by existing ASSIST Coordination Site (ACS) staff in consultation with CSUCO and CSU campus staff.

- 1) ACS staff will modify the existing “About this Page” descriptions and online help for the ASSIST Major Prep Explorer to include information about CSU choices (in addition to the current information about UC)
- 2) ACS staff will work with the CSUCO and CSU campuses to analyze the majors listed on the CSU admissions application and associate those choices with the degrees offered at the individual CSU campuses.
- 3) ACS staff will work with the CSU campuses to analyze the placement of CSU majors within specific “Areas of Study” and “Disciplines” in the Major Preparation Explorer. New “Areas of Study” and “Disciplines” will be created as needed.
- 4) ACS staff will enter the “Areas of Study”, “Disciplines” and “Real Majors” information into the Major Prep Explorer portion of the ASSIST database.
- 5) ACS staff will add primary website addresses (URLs) for each CSU campus to the Major Preparation Explorer portion of the ASSIST database.
- 6) ACS staff will locate URLs for each major in the CSU campus online catalogs to reference in the Major Prep Explorer “Major Detail” pages.
- 7) ACS staff will identify and implement appropriate links to CSUMentor from the Major Prep Explorer Major Detail pages.
- 8) ACS staff will work with CSUCO staff to write descriptions of any new “Areas of Study”, “Disciplines” and “Real Majors” for the top 20 CSU majors.
- 9) ACS staff will work with CSU campus staff to determine for which majors IGETC or CSU GE/Breadth is recommended for any majors and update corresponding data in the Major Prep Explorer portion of the ASSIST database.
- 10) ACS staff will program changes to the matrix of articulation reports on the Major Detail pages to include additional CSU GE/Breadth, CSU Baccalaureate and CSU American Institution options

- 11) The ACS will make the new CSU data in the expanded Major Prep Explorer available to CSU articulation officers and/or other CSU staff for previewing the information and will resolve any issues that arise based on the preview.
- 12) The ACS will publish the CSU data in the public ASSIST Major Prep Explorer and announce availability via the ASSIST-L listserv.
- 13) The ACS will upgrade the ASSIST Articulation Maintenance System as needed to support data entry and updating of Major Prep Explorer data by CSU campus staff. CSU campus staff will be responsible for maintaining the data in future years along with their traditional ASSIST articulation data.
- 14) The ACS will evaluate current capabilities in CSUMentor and propose to the CSUCO ways in which CSUMentor might be expanded to provide linkages into the ASSIST Major Prep Explorer.

Project Schedule:

The following milestones are anticipated to be completed by the end of the corresponding month. The ACS staff will be able to provide detailed status reports upon request at any time during the project.

August 2004

- Project approval by ASSIST Board of Directors

September 2004

- Analyze CSU majors data in relation to Areas of Study, Disciplines, Real Major names at campuses, and articulation in ASSIST
- Develop the functional requirements document for the project and a more specific project plan for Board review and approval
- Enter new data for CSU campuses into the Major Prep Explorer portion of the ASSIST database
- Modify “About this Page” descriptions and Major Prep Explorer help pages to add CSU information
- Program changes in the Major Detail pages for the CSU Bacc, CSU GE-B, and CSU American Institution list reports

October 2004

- Set up test site for CSU campuses and CSUCO to preview CSU data in the Major Prep Explorer
- Resolve any issues that arise during the preview
- Publish data and activate the ASSIST Major Prep Explorer with CSU data

November 2004

- Work on upgrading the ASSIST Articulation Maintenance System to support data entry of Major Preparation data by CSU campus articulation staff

December 2004

- Complete upgrades to the ASSIST Articulation Maintenance System to support data entry of Major Preparation data by CSU campus articulation staff
- Analyze CSUMentor and write a report to CSUCO on possibilities for expanding CSUMentor to include direct links into the ASSIST Major Prep Explorer

Project Costs:

All of the ASSIST-related work for this project will be conducted by existing ACS staff and the ASSIST Associate Director, Cathy Robin, will be the project lead. The following ACS staff members are expected to be involved at varying levels:

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| Cathy Robin | Associate Director | Project Lead |
| Dale Leaman | Implementation Coordinator | Data analysis, report specification development, testing |
| Lori Quillen | Customer Technical Support | Data analysis and entry |
| Doug Koeppen | Web Designer and Writer | Major Preparation Explorer design and content changes, documentation |
| Tony Toyofuku | Programmer/Analyst | Report and Web ASSIST programming |
| Starling Walter | Programmer/Analyst | Data Entry programming |

The development costs for this project will be \$40,000 to compensate for Coordination Site staff time allocated to project activities.

Expansion of the Major Prep Explorer to include CSU data will require additional ongoing support to CSU campuses for data and software maintenance. The server computers running the Major Prep Explorer will also incur a greater amount of use as more students use these expanded features. An additional \$10,000 per year will be needed to support the ongoing operation and maintenance of the expanded Major Prep Explorer.

The CSU Chancellor’s Office has committed to providing ASSIST with \$40,000 for development costs and an additional \$10,000 annually for operation, support, and maintenance.